



WILDS LODGE SCHOOL

A STATEMENT OF OUR AIMS AND PURPOSES

Date of issue: September 2023

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Wilds Lodge School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Wilds Lodge School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not

- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)

Wilds Lodge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Wilds Lodge School.

The policy documents of Wilds Lodge School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Introduction

In this document some of the main aims and purposes of the work we do with students with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH pupils) at Wilds Lodge are discussed. These aims are not meant to be exhaustive. Neither is it expected that we shall always be able to meet every objective. They represent a core of key ideas that guide and give meaning to our daily work.

Our aims and purposes constantly evolve in the face of experience and external demands. It is important, however, that we should have a clear set of ethical and practical principles. These create good practice and help us to identify and discard bad practice. The operational ethos of the school has to be understood by

all staff. It is with this purpose in mind that the following ideas are presented. They are not meant to provide a workshop manual for staff. They are intended to clarify our common sense of purpose, our practical objectives and our professional ethos. Many of the ideas are presented here only in outline and they are discussed in greater detail in separate papers. All of these are available to staff as part of our general documentation.

The four principal areas of our work are described. These are:

1. General Aims and Purposes
2. Child Care Practice
3. Therapeutic and Psychological Support
4. Educational Procedures

General aims and purposes – our professional ethos

A professional service

The provision we offer our SEMH students is a service. Our purpose is to serve the best interests of students with special educational and psychological needs. By implication, we also provide a service to their families and carers, as well as to the referring and placing agencies. It is this sense of service to others that should inform the personal and professional attitudes of the staff. Our common purpose is to present a high standard of professional service. We strive towards this goal both as individuals and as practitioners.

Considered behaviour

This professional stance implies a sense of carefully considered behaviour. As experienced practitioners, we have particular knowledge and practical skills. These aptitudes should always be employed in a considered and appropriate way towards others. It is this sense of reflective action, of informed intervention, which gives meaning to the notion of service. We do not react impulsively to students and situations. We are not at the mercy of our feelings. We attempt, in all our dealings with students, to be adults in the way we present ourselves; adults worthy of significance, in control of ourselves. As a consequence we shall be fit to take control of others. This is a primary aim of our professional stance.

A positive climate

We aim to create a climate within the school that is tolerant, well ordered, considerate and purposeful. To do this we need to be conscious that we create the climate. The social environment, the 'feeling-tone', the interpersonal texture, of the school emerges from the way we treat each other. We aim to emphasise and instil positive qualities - i.e. personal care, a regard for persons and property, sensitivity, affection, encouragement, kindness, justice and fair

treatment of others. In this sense a primary aim is to create and enrich the interpersonal and social environment of the school.

A duty of care

We not only serve the needs of our students, but we are also conscious that we have a duty of care and active protection towards them. This is our aim at all times and in every respect. The individual care and protection of our students and their interests is a very serious and heavy responsibility. We accept this task. It is our purpose to be active, constantly alert, in pursuit of the students' protection and welfare in every aspect of daily life in the school. We seek to protect them from every form of abuse – physical, emotional and sexual – and from any form of exploitation.

Control

All members of staff must be aware that we have a responsibility to be in control of our students at all times. This notion is central to our working; it facilitates a context that is safe for them. A secure and containing environment is indispensable for the work we do. As adults and professional practitioners we take full responsibility for this primary obligation. We aim to exercise control in a purposeful, sensitive and constructive fashion.

Staff as interventionists

It is our aim to be successful interventionists. We are active in the application of our skills. We do not ignore difficult and challenging behaviours. We intervene, take control and work situations through. In this way, we establish a further aim – to constantly evaluate and develop our skills.

Encouraging students to take responsibility

We encourage our students to take responsibility for their actions. We offer them opportunities for evaluation of their own feelings, attitudes and behaviours. It is important that they should have opportunities for self-regulation and shared responsibility. The purpose of all special intervention is enhanced personal competence and autonomy.

Continual improvement

A vital general objective is to try, in every way our resources allow, to ameliorate the difficulties of our students and to promote their success, confidence, personal growth and happiness. The emphasis, therefore, is upon the quality of our work. Our aim is to constantly seek to improve the overall quality of our care, treatment and education for the students of our school.

A balanced approach

One of our main intentions is to provide our students with a balanced placement experience. This anticipates an approach to the three primary dimensions of care, education and psychological support that is integrated and equitable. A balanced approach attends to all three areas of need.

The above aims and purposes say much about the personal qualities and attitudes that underpin the professional ethos of the school. Without a clear sense of personal direction, organisational aims cannot be effectively implemented. It is people who translate ideas into action.

It is now possible to explore the aims and purposes of our work in care, therapy and education.

Child Care – some key aims and practices

Professional attitude

It is our aim to be progressive and personalised in our professional attitude towards child care. The emotional, physical and social care of each student shares equal precedence with their educational and psychological needs. All are part of the student's total care.

Professional training

We are conscious of the need to meet the ideological and practical expectations that have been revised and upgraded in recent years. Care staff are therapeutic care workers in this school. All care practitioners are expected to hold relevant qualifications and the school will do all it can to encourage and facilitate professional development. The traditional 'divide' between care and educational staff has no place in our approach. The professional team includes all staff members and professional areas are seen as complementary and mutually supportive.

A period of challenge and transition

The whole SEN field has been the subject of an intensive period of challenge and transition. It is our aim to keep up to date with new ideas in theory and practice in residential child care. We are aware of a raft of changes of legislation, practice, inspection and so on. We accept and apply these principles and procedures. We are aware of the need to maintain and further develop our notions of good practice in child care; these ideas face constant challenge and revision in the light of contemporary thinking. It is our purpose to be progressive not static; to be critical not conservative or complacent.

Maintaining the child's place in his/her family

We place a great emphasis in our child care approach upon maintaining, strengthening and repairing the student's place within their family. The integrity of his/her family position is of critical importance. It is vital to our purposes in terms of successful treatment, enhanced development and reintegration into family and mainstream schooling. This ideal cannot always be sustained. However, the notion of 'partnership with parents' (and/or carers) is central to our child care philosophy and practice. Hence supportive family work is emphasised as a key component in our child care reparative work. This concept carries great significance for the emotional life of the child, for his prospects of recovery and for the way in which the student perceives the value of his placement in our school.

A high standard of physical care

It is our purpose to work constantly towards a high standard of physical care throughout the school. The environment is the physical context through which we express our care. This must embrace things as well as people. This means a constant attention to the physical quality of our provision. The living context for each child should be clean, attractive and materially pleasing. Respect and pride in the external environment goes hand in hand with good child care practice. Though the child's inner world may be in disorder we must provide compensations in the appeal of his outer world.

Unqualified personal acceptance

It is a steadfast principle of our child care procedures that we offer our pupils stability, affection and unqualified personal acceptance. This does not imply that we condone their inappropriate behaviours. We do accept them unreservedly, however, as persons; unique and valuable in their individuality. This is a key aspect of our approach to care and should be reflected in our daily life together. It is a critical feature of the way in which we relate with the children and will determine the quality of our personal relationships with our students.

Anti-institutional practices

We are anti-institutional in our child care practices and philosophy. The 'collective approach' to sanctions, procedures and treatment are kept to a minimum. We try to think individually about the care of our students. Their individuality must not be submerged. Although we accept that group living has certain unavoidable dynamics that can be used constructively, we speak and relate with students as individuals.

Effective control

Effective control is an essential purpose of our child care approach. Love without control is not sufficient. Effective control stems from the respect that is evident between adults and students. It also depends upon caring relationships for it is this affective bond between child and adult which creates and preserves good control. It is our aim to control our students through the strength of our

personal bond with them so that the rules we follow are seen to have meaning in human terms in maintaining the stability and happiness of the school. The development of relationships are central to this.

The individuality of the student

We place great emphasis upon respect for the individuality of each student. It is our aim to make the treatment experience a personalised one for each individual. Good child care practice seeks to minimise the corporate aspects of living with young people; it tries, on the contrary, to engage with the separateness of the individual student. His/her 'world view' is unique and deserves our respect and attention. Personal views and feelings are not to be submerged because we live in groups.

A broader interpretation of 'care'

We also take a broader view of the meaning of 'care.' It is a concept that needs to permeate all the main areas of the child's experiences within the school. It is not merely a set of techniques which apply to specific 'house-care' activities. The young person's overall nurturance demands good child care procedures which embrace their personal, education, physical, emotional and social development. It is a set of attitudes, as well as practices. It calls our attention to a fundamental purpose – the duty of care and caring which is our professional obligation towards each student in the school. This dissemination of the concept of care is a vital component in our model.

Individual care plans/tracker

To focus our minds on the specific goals of our care programme, we feel it is important to have a personal care plan for each student in the school. This identifies individual needs and provides a focus of achievement for the staff. These goals may be viable; they may change; they may even prove to be unachievable. Nevertheless a plan should exist for each pupil and it should be monitored and evaluated through the annual review and revised as the child's placement progresses. This will provide a record of the child's placement experience and it may help us to evaluate some aspects of our effectiveness in meeting the student's needs.

Child Protection/Safeguarding

It is a critical aim of this school to provide very clear and strict guidelines regarding matters which relate to physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse – both at home and at school. This is vital to the care and protection of each student. Clear procedures are in place to cover all aspects of complaints and disclosures, referral of complaints, and related procedures for communication and investigation. These guidelines are careful and explicit. They cover disclosure, investigation and recording. They reflect up to date advice from the Safeguarding agencies. These procedures will protect staff as well as students.

The above comments draw attention to some of the most important aims and purposes that underpin our child care approach. Many of the ideas are developed in more detail in other papers. Here we have been concerned to bring forward some of the important features which create our working ethos, the positive climate of good child care practice which is our constant obligation.

Therapeutic support – Some key aims and Purposes

More detailed discussion of our therapeutic and psychological approach to treatment is provided in separate papers. The following aims give a general indication for all staff of the purposes of our therapeutic work. This is the framework within which we try to meet individual psychological needs and attempt to facilitate the healthy psychological development of our students.

An integrated model

A main aim is to provide a treatment model which gives due recognition to the individual's psychological needs in relation to their educational needs. This is what we mean when we refer to our 'integrated model'. It is our belief that this balance is essential. Approaches which are too heavily educational, or too heavily therapeutic, are not likely to succeed. We recognise that our therapeutic work is based in an educational setting.

A wider concept of education

This integrated approach has an important purpose. It takes into account the fact that our students are not only in need of special educational support, but also that they have been assessed by psychological services as requiring social, emotional and mental health support. By integrating the psychological with the educational needs of the student, we aim to provide a model in which the concept of 'education' takes on a wider and deeper meaning. Learning about the 'self' and 'others' can then go hand in hand with other more formal aspects of learning. The 'therapeutic' and the 'educational' can then be experienced as mutually supportive learning activities.

A shared working relationship

Through this approach we aim to bring our three professional groups (teaching, child care and therapeutic staff) into a shared working relationship. Therapeutic objectives can be better achieved in a model that seeks to integrate our professional working and identify common goals. We are against 'compartmentalised specialisms'. We want to bring the full resources of our specialist team together in a way that allows classroom needs, care needs and therapeutic needs to be seen as inter-related.

A therapeutic school

With the above in mind, we reiterate that we are a 'therapeutic school'. This is still an exploratory concept in which our purpose is to equalise therapy with education. 'Therapeutic Communities', in the past, have not been successful (and sometimes not interested in) achieving this balance. We aim to explore and develop this model. We face difficulties that attend a pioneering path. We must be prepared to make errors and to discard ideas and practices which are shown to be defective. We have made considerable progress over many years by following these principles.

A psychodynamic psychological approach

Our psychological approach to the treatment of SEMH children is unhesitatingly a psychodynamic one. Our purpose is to explore and understand with the child their unique responses to his/her inner and outer worlds. Alongside this approach goes a wider support system which identifies rewards and celebrates personal success. This is a supportive framework of encouragement; it is not seen as a primary therapeutic mode. The idea is to adapt certain aspects of 'success reinforcement' as an aid to the management of our students. In this we recognise a useful set of procedures that allows participation by all professional staff and thereby strengthens the 'team approach' to achieving therapeutic intentions.

A therapeutic distance

Our psychodynamic orientation implies that all staff are constantly aware of their therapeutic interaction with students. We should all aim to maintain a 'therapeutic distance'. We are not substitute parents (though in a very special way we may be 'used' as such). Our purpose is to understand, care, guide and teach. These are skilled activities. Getting too close can damage our professional value and our own usefulness as practitioners.

Therapeutic facilitation

In this sense it is everyone's aim in the school to be a 'therapeutic facilitator'. Therapy is not, in our model, a 'behind closed doors' activity. This is often the case in terms of individual and group work, but we do not recognise the therapeutic process as something exclusive and esoteric. We all have a part to play in trying to understand and creatively direct the complexities of our students' responses. Exposure to therapy 'per se' is no guarantee of improvement. The facilitation of healthy psychological growth in the student is an objective which unites us all.

Thinking therapeutically

We try to be aware that our every word and action has a significance in terms of therapeutic interaction with our students. In this the teacher and the care worker have a shared responsibility with the psychological staff. This is, in a very important sense, an invitation to 'think therapeutically'. This is a vital aim for all staff when we consider that our students are exposed to care and teaching

staff for such long periods of time. The 'therapeutic session' with psychological staff is strengthened in its value if the feelings which it releases are contained and positively directed in the classroom and the house care setting. Teachers and residential social workers have a serious therapeutic responsibility in this sense.

Sympathetic listening

Our therapeutic style, psychodynamically orientated, implies that sympathetic listening to children is at the heart of our approach. Time for talking about thoughts, actions and feelings is an essential requirement.

In our psycho-therapeutic work with young people we are concerned to approach the child from 'the inside' in order to help him/her to identify and understand what is happening to their inner world in relation to their background, upbringing and present experiences. In this way we hope to construct a more satisfying present and anticipate a more successful future.

Good role models

A vital purpose of our therapeutic work is to present adult models which our students can relate with, respect and imitate. In terms of identification we educate by our example. The therapeutic implications of our own behaviour are profound. Our talking and listening will be totally wasted if there is no congruence with the personal examples we set. We must always remember that we, as highly significant adult models, serve a compensatory and imitative function for many of our students.

Reparative work

An important aim of our therapeutic work is the reparative function. It is in this concept that we see the need for patient and consistent counselling. All our students are troubled and are seeking help with the problems they face – at school, at home and within themselves. They are often troubled and they are often troublesome to others, given the difficulties they face. They are frequently in conflict over unacceptable aspects of themselves and their relationships. These conflicts give rise to anxiety and emotional hurt which may have a detrimental influence on their emotional, social and intellectual growth.

It is in these areas that we see our main therapeutic purposes i.e. the drive toward better self-understanding, greater awareness of others, more appropriate choice of behaviours and an increased sense of personal responsibility.

Levels of therapeutic intervention

Hence our therapeutic model aims to provide help at four key levels of intervention:

- o Individual therapy

- o Group therapy
- o Child centred family support
- o Whole school therapeutic support plan – personal support work (PSW) for each pupil.

All of these areas are dealt with in other papers. Suffice it here to say that our experience over many years working with SEMH pupils has shown us that effective intervention at a therapeutic level depends crucially upon our willingness to engage in reparative work in these vital areas of the young person's life. These dimensions form the keystones of our psychological approach to treatment.

A Whole School Therapeutic Support Plan

This whole school approach to counselling support has been developed over the last few years. It ensures all the students in the school receive an appropriate level of individual support. It also involves all the residential social work team in a focused programme of personal support work (PSW) for each student. It makes the integration of the therapeutic work in the school clearer and more effective. This programme is one of our most important conceptual and practical developments in recent years.

In presenting the above aims and purposes of our therapeutic programme, the intention has been to show:

- o The relevance of the psychological support programme as an integral feature of our overall approach;
- o The way in which all staff carry responsibilities to think of themselves as part of the process of therapeutic facilitation;
- o That this perspective cuts across compartmentalised working and makes our integrated model more effective.

Educational Programme – Some Key Aims and Purposes

The intention and content of the education programme of the school is presented in greater detail in various educational papers in the staff handbook. In this section, only some of the more important general aims of our provision and our procedures are described.

The contribution of education to psychological development

We intend that the education programme of the school should form an integral part of the total experience. While we seek to meet curriculum requirements, we are also aware that enhanced academic competence has a positive impact on the psychological development of the young person. With this in mind it is our

purpose to develop experiences of success in the classroom. The old 'failure identity' of so many of our students, so frequently related to their anxiety about classroom work, can be replaced by a 'success identity.' It is our aim to build self-esteem through active participation in successful classroom experiences. In this way the educational process is at one with our other major developmental concerns in the care and therapeutic arenas.

Learning about the self

Insights which are gained in therapy, are seen as part of the education process. Learning about 'the self' and how to treat other people is integrated with learning about 'subjects'. It is seen as part of our teaching skills, in our very particular context, to be able to work with the student's feelings and behaviours in the classroom context.

Education informing social competence and awareness

Equally, many things which arise in class can be used and worked through in the formal therapeutic setting. This reciprocity is important. It implies a process of education directed not just towards subject knowledge but towards vital areas of social competence and personal awareness. This makes possible levels of insight that lead to changes in behaviour and attitude – both outside and inside the classroom. We believe that a vital purpose in the management of SEMH students is to engender self-management. This demands a view of education which is not too narrowly subject based – it must extend as well to the student as a person. The student is also the subject of his/her learning.

With this aim, it follows that we carry additional educational goals that do not always coincide with those of conventional day schools. These goals relate to the tasks of developing the social and emotional maturity and the interpersonal skills of our students. This requires a level of awareness and a flexibility of response in the teacher which is sometimes going to be in conflict with the narrower requirements of a narrowly prescribed curriculum. Our teaching staff deal with students who have already failed, often dramatically, in the ordinary school setting. Their individual emotional and social needs do have to be taken into account in the classroom. It is our aim to combine our attempts to meet these personal needs with good and effective classroom teaching.

Where individual allowances need to be made, there is a formal mechanism for doing so through the annual review of the EHCP.

A successful classroom experience

Many of our students have experienced learning difficulties and classroom failure. The classroom is often associated with anxiety. It is our aim to present the classroom experience to the student as a place where they can find success and confidence. This process of re-discovery is part of the reparative process which involves many areas of our work. It is essential to the student's willingness to take an active part in the learning process.

Peaceful classrooms

We see an important objective in the idea that the student who is emotionally insecure and fearful of failure should be able to explore success in a context which is both peaceful and stimulating. This is the atmosphere we try to set in our classrooms. Given the serious level of disturbance which characterises our population prior to admission, this is a difficult objective to achieve. However, the orderly classroom tone is something we aim for whenever possible. Again, by providing a peaceful atmosphere for work and growth the education experience is at one with the therapeutic experience.

Small class groups

We aim to provide small classroom groups wherever possible in the 1:8 teacher to student ratio. This allows for personal support and more teacher time for each student.

Annual Reviews of the EHCP

The appropriateness of the long-term programmes should be examined through the annual review. Individual plans and work schedules may need to be revised. We aim to be systematic in these procedures and we accept that this documentation gives method and structure to our teaching goals and also to our recording procedures.

The National Curriculum

The overall purpose of our educational provision is to provide each pupil with a range of academic opportunities which are directly in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum, but differentiated as appropriate to meet individual needs.

External accreditation

We aim to provide opportunities for success in external examinations for the majority of our pupils. We shall continue to offer a variety of externally moderated examinations, primarily at GCSE, BTECH, and at Entry Level. These goals help to 'normalise' the academic expectations that we have of our pupils and to strengthen their self esteem. Over-emphasis, however, can lead to anxiety and we need to be very careful about the amount of competitive pressure we generate given the emotional frailties of some of our pupils.

We feel it is important to set a tone of positive individual achievement as opposed to one of competitive pressure for academic success. A firm, well organised, but sensibly paced approach to the requirements of the National Curriculum is most likely to succeed with our pupils. This also applies to examination work. We do not aim to be 'special' in the sense of compromising with normal societal and

personal aspirations. We do aim to establish and maintain 'normalized traditions' and this is synonymous, in our view, with 'good traditions'. It is against these good educational traditions and normalised expectations of our pupils that the need for individual departures should be set. Our 'norm' then becomes one of achievement, not non-achievement.

Recording, Reporting and Assessment

Full records of educational progress and achievement are maintained by the teachers and overseen by the Head of Education.

Key Stage 4 programme

An increasing flexibility has been introduced to the provision all schools can offer to KS4 pupils. We have taken full advantage of this to access a programme of taster/courses at local FE colleges wherever possible. It is our intention that all pupils should have the opportunity to experience the post-16 environment while being supported by the school staff. It is a preparation for leaving with an emphasis upon personal maturity of attitude, successful reintegration into the family and preparation for employment. These are obligations which teachers face to some extent in the ordinary school setting but in our context, they need very careful attention indeed.

Similarly, work experience is an expectation for all KS4 pupils and we are flexible in our provision. We have many excellent contacts available.

Reintegration into mainstream schools

We aim always to keep before us the possibility of reintegrating our pupils into mainstream schooling. The children also need to be able to discuss this possibility with staff. We monitor this idea with the child, their family and external agencies at the pupil's annual review of the EHCP.

Good expectations

Finally, we aim for quality of educational provision and for high personal standards of pupil achievement. We readily accept that this principle has to be set against the child's level of capability and their motivation for achievement. We do not, however, accept the idea that children with SEMH cannot aspire to good work habits, take pride in their own level of achievement, and respond to imaginative teaching. We do not wish to create unnecessary pressures or competitive anxieties in our classrooms. We try to release within each pupil a relaxed willingness to engage actively with the learning tasks, to realise something of his/her innate potentials, to express their interests and to find some pleasure in gaining knowledge and increased competence.

CONCLUSION

In bringing forward some of these key aims and purposes, an attempt has been made to express a common framework which binds together the efforts of every practitioner in the school. We are variously teachers, teaching assistants, behaviour welfare practitioners, therapeutic care workers, or therapists. Sometimes, in an informal sense, interchangeably. Yet we are also many other things, at all times, to the children who live with us at the school. These aims say something about our sense of unity and our working intentions. They are about objectives but they also clarify our personal and professional dispositions. They call our attention not merely to operational principles but also to the human and social texture of the school.

In conclusion, it needs to be pointed out once again that we cannot expect to fulfil all of these ideals. This is particularly so in a school which takes pupils at the extreme end of the SEMH spectrum. LEAs do not place pupils 'out of county' who can be coped with within their own local facilities. We deal, therefore, with a school population which rates very highly in terms of educational, emotional and social disturbance. These aims and purposes express our professional commitment and our steadfast intent to bring something of demonstrable value into the concept of special intervention. Our working model, with all its strengths and limitations, is peculiarly our own. It has evolved across the years and it has been tested by daily practice. We have struggled towards a set of viable theoretic and practical principles. These now informed our integrated approach to the care, education and psychological treatment of SEMH children. In this task we have been as much in need of inspiration as we have of resolution. The ideas expressed in this paper underpin the integrity of our efforts to serve the best interests of the children who are placed in our care.